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U. S. Department of Agriculture

THE PECAN

SOME POINTS, POINTERS AND SUGGESTIONS



J. B. WIGHT

PROPRIETOR

PECAN GROVE FARM, NURSERY

AND ORCHARD

CAIRO

GEORGIA



Some of the Members of the National Nut Growers' Association and Visitors at a Barbecue on the Ranch of Mr. S. P. Rowe, Wharton, Texas, November 7, 1913. In the Background of This Picture is a Native Pecan Grove Showing Trees as They Grow in the Native Forests. These Trees Are Heavily Draped With Spanish Moss and at the Time the Photograph Was Made Bore a Good Crop of Nuts. From 90 to 95 Per Cent of the Pecans of Commerce Come From Wild Trees. The Second Person to the Left is Secretary of Agriculture, Kone, of Texas.

Pecan Growing—A New Industry

NINETY-FIVE per cent of the improved varieties of pecans now growing have been set within the last ten years. While the industry was first begun with seedlings as a basis, yet modern research has discovered how to bud and graft trees, and no one would now think any more of putting out a commercial orchard of pecan seedlings than he would an orchard of seedling peach or apple trees. Throughout the pecan belt are individual trees that are worth from \$500 to \$1,000 each, based on an 8 per cent annual income on this amount. A tree yielding an average crop of \$50 worth of nuts per year, allowing \$10 for gathering and marketing them, is well worth \$500, this being 8 per cent net of that amount. Some of the trees referred to in this booklet have produced an income of \$100 per year, and that, too, with a minimum expenditure of time and energy. The conclusion is inevitable even were the price of nuts one-fourth what it is now; and he who fails to set at least a few pecan trees is neglecting a splendid opportunity both for pleasure and profit. They are easily grown. They are as healthy as any fruit tree. Why not make every village and country home in the pecan belt beautiful with trees, and the pockets of their owners rejoice from a satisfaction of fullness?

As An Investment

THE following is taken from the President's address to the National Nut Growers' Association in 1909: "The pecan in particular is an unknown quantity to the people of the world. This generation and the next will pass

before it is likely that this queen of nuts will be known to the world. When and wherever it has been introduced it has held its own. When the wheat and corn fields of the West cease to be profitable, when there is no longer a demand for the fleecy staple of the South, and when the spindles of our factories lie idle because there is no need for their products, then, and not until then, need the pecan growers fear for their industry."

Overdoing

THE following is taken from an article in The Country Gentleman, entitled, "Will There be a Pecan Avalanche?" "There is little doubt that the demand already exists. A recent article in this paper explaining the quality of pecans brought many inquiries from northern readers who wanted to know where fine nuts could be bought in consumer lots. Experience with the limited crops of paper-shell pecans thus far grown proves that they make their way wherever introduced. There need be no anxiety about the size of the crop, for the consumption of nuts increases at a remarkable rate. Every improvement in quality, and the making of nuts easier to eat by machine cracking, simply serve to increase prices and importations. The more nuts there are the more people eat, and the more they use in confectionary and cooking."

The area where pecan nuts can be grown most successfully is practically confined to the cotton belt of the South. When there are enough nuts to market we will have the world for a customer. More and more they are becoming regular

articles of food. During the spring of 1915 one company placed a single order for 230,000 pounds of the pecan meats. The price of ordinary seedling nuts is higher now than it was twenty-five years ago, because their food value has become better known. When the price of nuts becomes such that people can afford to eat them then they will do so, for our doctors and scientists are telling us that if we will eat more fruits and nuts and less meats we would be healthier. That prince of horticulturists, Mr. E. W. Kirkpatrick, of Texas, says: "The pecan will ere long become the most valuable and willing servant of mankind. These mute servants will be sentinels of prosperity about the houses of the happy, contented people. Prevailing necessity calls for basic changes in our food regime, a change from animal to vegetable, the primal factor of which will be nuts. Thus rapidly and surely are we returning to the original design of Deity—a design which will lead us to a more sublime destiny."

Aristocrat Among Trees

A TEXAS PAPER thus breaks forth in the praise of the pecan: "In song and poetry the stately oak has been idealized as the monarch of the forest. In this country the clean and strong form of the pecan proclaims it the aristocrat among trees. It is a little slow of growth, but never stops until it lifts its proud head above all other trees. Its symmetrical form, its graceful branches, its straight trunk, its graceful swaying, its foliage makes it a thing of beauty. As a shade tree or an ornamental tree



In a Pecan Nursery in July. The Greatest Care Is Taken in the Propagation and Cultivation of Pecan Trees Which Are Grown for Transplanting to Modern Orchards

it has few equals and no superiors. Its long life teaches us the important lesson of preparing unspeakable pleasures for other generations.

"Its shade is not so dense as to wither out the grass nor to breed disease. It is among the cleanest trees that grow. Its stately appearance and graceful form, its long well formed branches, swaying like ostrich plumes in the breeze, give it an attractiveness rarely found. It furnishes a fine crop of the choicest nuts. It would seem far wiser to fill our yards with these trees, rather than the hackberry or other short-lived trees or with grass-destroying cedar. Nut trees about a home, in addition to their beauty and utility, are wonderfully dear to the heart of a small boy. They are some of the strong links that bind the erring hearts of youngsters to the dear old home. Ornament your home with these beautiful long-lived trees. Even if they are slow of growth, their long useful life more than makes up the loss. A few pecan trees around your home will give additional fame to our country as "the home of the paper-shell pecan."

Things of Beauty

THE pecan is a thing of beauty, and comes as near being "a joy forever" as any one of our trees. For there are well authenticated records of trees having been cut in the native forests of Texas, which by their rings were shown to be more than four hundred years old. Pecans make as beautiful a shade about the home as does the oak, the sycamore, or any other of our native trees. In addition to the beauty it also furnishes a valuable crop. For this reason there is no better tree to plant around our homes either for shade or for profit than the pecan. Almost every yard in Monticello, Florida, has pecan trees growing in it. Cairo, Georgia, as well as many other towns which might be mentioned, has pecan trees in almost every yard.

There is money in pecan growing when properly managed; and the pecans of the South should be grown by the people of the South, as is our cotton. And while not supplanting cotton, pecans should be our great secondary money crop.



A Pecan Tree Dwarfed by Neglect. This Tree Is Sixteen Years Old and Is Four Feet Six Inches in Height

Food Value of Pecans

THAT which makes nuts such an excellent article of food is that their nutritive elements are almost perfectly proportioned; that is to say, that a normal body requires so much water, proteids, carbohydrates, mineral salts and fat, to sustain it healthfully each twenty-four hours, and in nuts these elements are found more correctly proportioned, according to the requirements of the body, than in any other article of food known to chemists."—The Nut Grower.

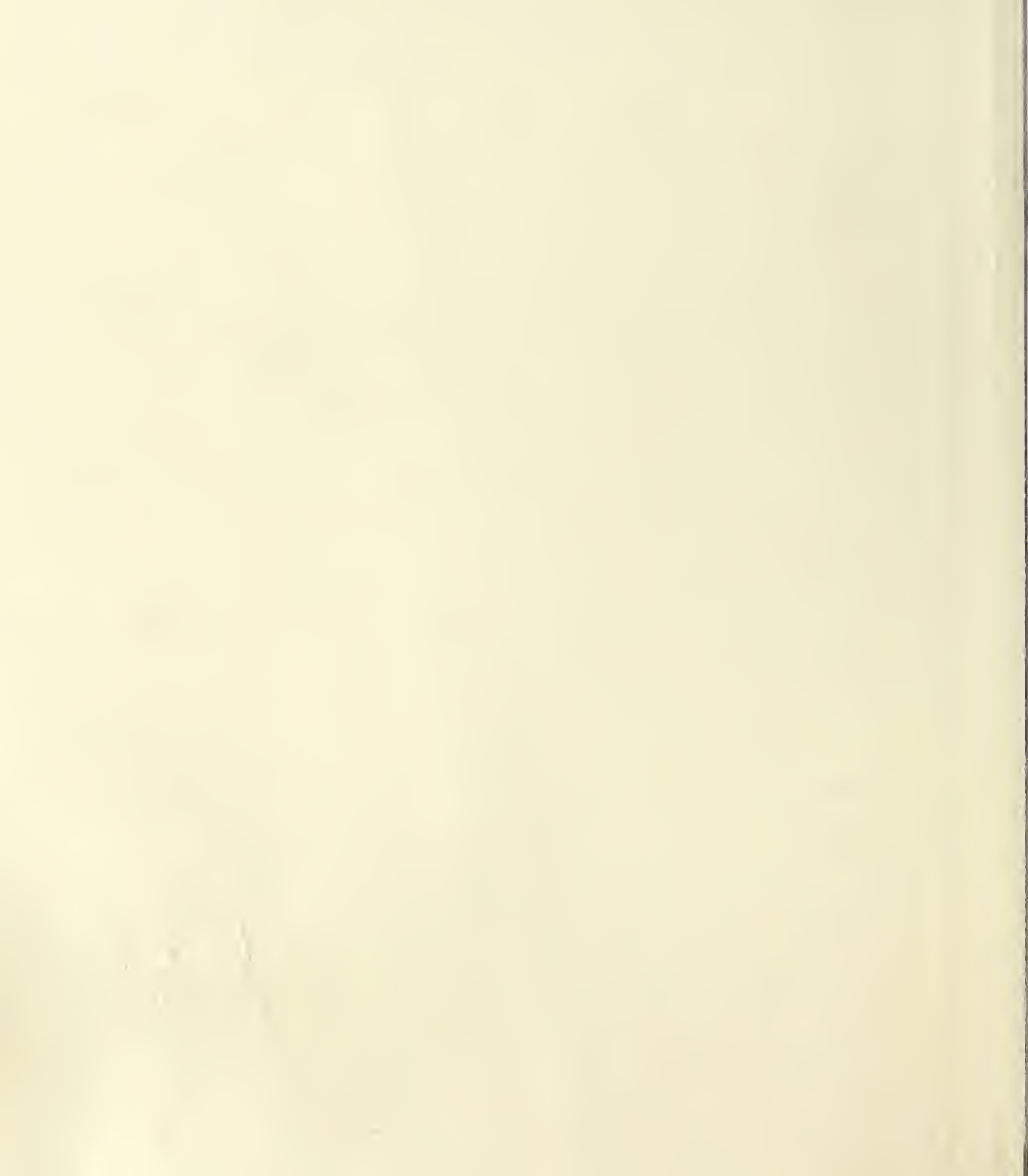
"The nut is the ideal carbonaceous food. It is richer in all the food elements than the best beefsteak. In the slain carcass of our dumb animal friends the presence of death and decay is to be found in every tissue. Folded in the cells of the nut is slumbering life energy that becomes a part of the vitality of the person who eats it. Nuts and fruits, full of the imprisoned energy caught from the sun, are the strongest and most healthful diet for man, and must lead to higher levels of moral and intellectual life."—The National Horticulturist.



Mr. J. B. Wight's Famous Frotscher Tree Which Has Averaged \$100 a Year for Five Years. Read Its Record

Some Fundamentals and Conclusions

IN 1908 the writer read a paper before the convention of the National Nut Growers' Association at Chattanooga. While much has been learned since then about nut growing, yet if I were reading a like paper today, I see no reason why any statement or conclusion given then should be materially changed. The following extract is taken from that paper: "The nut-producing qualities of the pecan is no longer a debatable question. The nature-planted trees that have for hundreds of years yielded their crops of nuts and withstood the vicissitudes of wind and weather, of man and beast, attest this. Trees a hundred years old planted by man, and annually increasing in size and productiveness, go to show that it responds readily to cultivation. We can produce the nuts. What more could be demanded?" "Again people want these nuts. They are willing to part with their silver and gold to get them.





Cotton Is Seen Growing Among These Trees Which Are Eight Years Old and Have an Estimated Crop of From Four to Twenty Pounds of Nuts Per Tree

Substantial purses have been filled through the sale of nuts from one tree, and this not simply in a few isolated cases. Here and there through the pecan belt are individual trees that have enriched their owners, fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred dollars per year. If one tree so behaves, why not a dozen? And if a dozen, why not as many hundred? Who will gainsay the soundness of this logic?

"There is money to be made in pecan growing when judiciously conducted in a business-like manner. When we consider the long life and healthfulness of the tree, and also the abundant time in which the nuts can be gathered and marketed, I do not know a more attractive field in all the realm of horticulture than this.

"But the company that is organized for purely speculative purposes and represents to prospective investors annual profits of from 500 to 1,000 per cent on the money invested, is doing a questionable business. Understand me; I do not wish to discourage the formation of companies for growing pecans; but I do say that the pecan

proposition, when properly handled, is in itself attractive enough without any extra touches of rainbow coloring to set off the picture.

"Without the desire to pose as a prophet, it is safe to predict that in ten to twenty years from now there will be thousands who will be glad of the fact that the question as to where tomorrow's food and shelter are coming from, will not worry them; and that fear of poverty—that terror of old age,—has lost its sting. These are they who years before planted pecan trees, and cared for them as they would a garden."

A Record Tree

THE Frotscher tree pictured on page seven is probably the best known pecan tree in existence, due to the fact that the carefully kept records of its growth and crops of nuts have been very widely published. It stands within 200 feet of the residence of Mr. J. B. Wight, in Cairo, Georgia, on ground formerly used as a garden; but Orpingtons now desport themselves in its cooling shade.



A Vigorous Young Orchard Ten Years Old. Peanuts Are Growing Between the Trees. It is Proposed to Make This Orchard Worth One Thousand Dollars Per Acre When It Is Fifteen Years Old, Based on Eight Per Cent Net Income on that Amount

The leading facts in regard to it are as follows: Bought in January, 1892, from William Nelson, New Orleans; cost \$2.00; height when set three feet; height in 1915, sixty-six feet; spread of branches, eighty-five feet. After this tree came into bearing, stable manure and guano valued at from \$1.00 to \$2.00 have been applied about the tree each winter. The early crops of nuts sold at 75 cents per pound, and prices have gradually ranged downward to the last crop which averaged 35 cents per pound. This tree has yielded an average income of \$100 a year for five consecutive years.

The following is the record of the growth and bearing of this tree:

	Circumference	Nuts in
	inches	pounds
1894	8½	
1895	12¼	
1896	14½	1 nut
1897	20	7 lbs.
1898	25	10½
1899	29¾	13½
1900	33¾	27
1901	37¼	16
1902	40¼	45

1903	44	inches	80	lbs.
1904	46¾	"	121	"
1905	50	"	131	"
1906	53	"	96	"
1907	56	"	30	"
1908	59½	"	169	"
1909	62	"	352	"
1910	65	"	196	"
1911	66	"	306	"
1912	68	"	196	"
1913	71	"	341	"
1914	72	"	145	"

Will It Pay?

THE following reply to a letter of inquiry from Mrs. M. L. Randolph, as to whether or not it will pay to set land to pecan trees, and the value of such land when properly planted, is so pertinent that it is given in full here:

"Cairo, Ga.

"Mrs. M. L. Randolph, Bayou Goula, La.

"Dear Madame: Yours of the 15th inst. in regard to pecans is received. Your question will have to be considered in the same manner as any other business proposition is viewed. You might



They Are Even Beautiful in Winter, Although Dormant. It Is During the Cold Months that the Pecan Sheds Its Leaves to Give Nature Opportunity to Clean House for the Spring Leaing and Fruiting

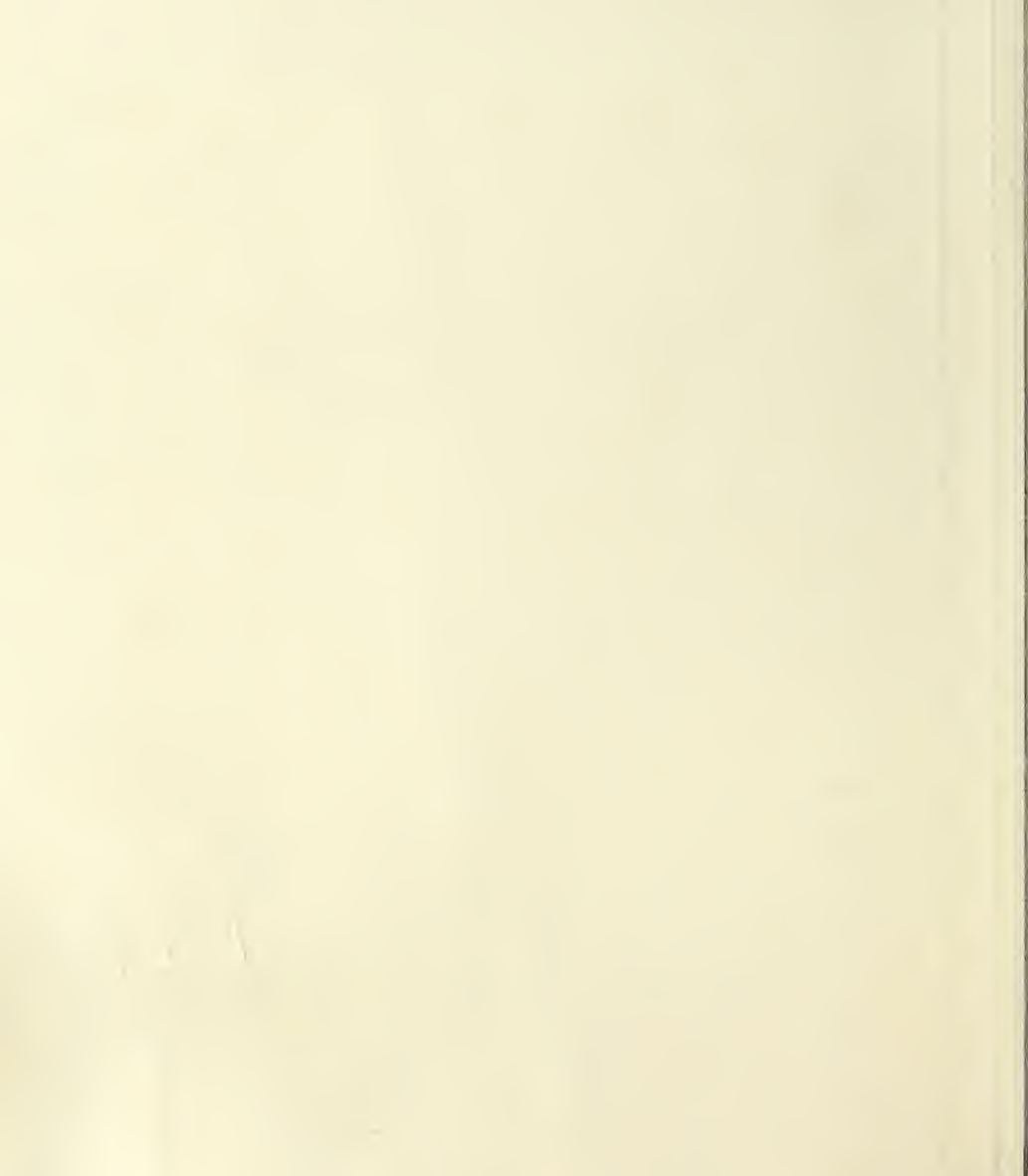
ask if it pays to plant corn, or cotton, or cane, or potatoes. I would answer, yes, if planted in the proper manner, under favorable conditions, and they are well cared for. I would say, no, if opposite conditions prevail. It is exactly the same way with pecans. If the best varieties are set, strong and vigorous trees used, and intelligently cared for, they will increase the value of the land very materially. But I wish to warn you against lending a ready ear to those who, having trees to sell, lead one to believe that there is nothing to do but set a pecan grove and one's fortune is made. While there are hand-some profits to be made in growing pecans, yet they come, as in other things, only to those who exercise business diligence and foresight.

"The increased value that would accrue to land set in pecan trees is somewhat problematical. Furthermore, such increase up to the time the trees come into bearing would be prospective rather than actual, so far as income is concerned. I give you the following, however, which I

believe will stand the test: Good land set in vigorous budded trees at the end of the first year is worth \$100 per acre. Add \$50 to this value at the end of each year of growth. With this as a basis, your land should therefore be worth—

At the end of 5 years	\$300 per acre
At the end of 10 years	\$550 per acre
At the end of 15 years	\$800 per acre

"While varieties differ slightly as to the age at which they begin to bear, yet this may be safely put at from four to six years from the time trees are transplanted. By the tenth year, when the value as above is \$550, the net income per acre should be 8 per cent of this amount, or \$44. This is probably about as early as the trees would begin to pay a reasonable income on the value as figured above. By the fifteenth year the net income would be \$64 per acre, or 8 per cent on \$800. The twentieth year should show more than a net income of \$84 per acre, or an 8 per cent income on a valuation of \$1,050 per acre, according to the above estimate. By net income





A Fourteen-Year-Old Pecan Orchard. These Trees Are Set Forty-seven Feet Apart, Twenty Trees to the Acre. They Are Now Beginning to Meet in the Middles. This Is a Clear Demonstration of the Fact that the Above Distance Is Too Close and Will Produce Smaller Nuts

is meant what remains after deducting a reasonable amount for cultivating and fertilizing trees, and for the gathering of the nuts. It has been shown that land set in pecans can be made to pay for its cultivation and fertilizing by the crops of cotton, peas, potatoes, vegetables, etc., that are grown between the trees.

"Now the above estimate is not by any means visionary. While it has not been demonstrated with orchards on a large scale, yet it has been shown to be a very conservative estimate both by myself and by other growers of pecans. There are orchards of budded pecan trees in this section that can not be bought on the above basis. Understand me that when I give these figures I emphasize the fact that the trees must be properly cared for. If you are going to set them out in a careless manner and leave them to the indifferent attention of hired help, to be run over and broken down by the stock, and to be smothered by weeds and grass, then this will not be borne out by results. This estimate is based on

good land, good trees and good attention to be paid to them. These being given, you will not be disappointed in results. Trusting the above will be satisfactory, I am,

"Very truly yours,

"J. B. WIGHT."

THERE is a picture on page 18 in this booklet which bears this legend: "A \$25,000 Pecan Tree." It has been worth that much to me because it started me to growing pecans. But it is nothing more than an ordinary seedling standing as a lone sentinel in a cornfield four miles north of Cairo, Georgia. Thirty years ago my attention was directed to it. Inquiry developed that this tree bore one hundred to two hundred pounds of nuts per year, which sold for 10 cents per pound. To a young man looking to the future, was not that a pointer? One tree without any particular attention producing \$10 to \$20 per year! Why should not a hundred trees do relatively as well? And if a hundred, why not a thousand? So I reasoned then; and who can gainsay the logic of the conclusion?



A Grove of Fine Seedling Trees, Most of Which Are Bearing Profitable Crops. Seedling Pecan Trees, Like Other Nut and Fruit Trees, Are Now Considered so Unreliable in Coming Into Bearing and in Size of Crops That Very Few Are Set in Orchards at This Time

Difficulties Met and Overcome

NEW business enterprises are usually disappointing in that realization rarely equals anticipation. Most of the enchantments of youth lose their glamour as the years come and go; but in this instance it has been different. Today the pecan business appears more promising than it did the day when the first pecan nuts were planted to start an orchard. Whatever success has come to me, at least financially, is due more to pecans than to all other agencies combined. But many hard lessons had to be learned, and many mistakes were made. Only seedlings were set at first; and much valuable time has been required to undo the work of these early years either in taking out worthless trees, or in cutting off a worthless head and budding on a better one! Mistakes were also made in setting trees on lands unsuited to them, in improper cultivation, in using varieties unadapted to

Georgia, and the like. Suffice it is to say that it would have been worth tens of thousands of dollars to have known in the beginning what it has required years of costly experience to learn. Such mistakes need not be repeated by future pecan growers.

The Situation Changed

IT was about twenty-five years ago that the art of budding pecan trees was begun by Mr. William Nelson, of New Orleans. Grafting came a few years later. Very few things are more uncertain than seedling pecan trees. As a consequence, few commercial orchards were set up to that time, the dependence for nuts being upon the wild trees of the southwest, particularly Texas. Since the art of budding and grafting pecan trees has been learned the proposition is much more favorable to pecan growing. By choosing varieties which are known to be early, prolific, and regular bearers, there is as much certainty as to the time of coming into bearing



A \$25,000 Pecan Tree, Because It Started Mr. Wight in the Pecan Business Many Years Ago

as there is with apple or peach trees. Furthermore, as every tree of a good variety produces nuts, many more pounds of nuts per acre will be produced at a given age. For this reason he who sets a tree or a grove now has an immense advantage over him who, beginning years ago, was restricted to the use of seedlings.

Three Requisites to Success

THERE are three requisites to success in pecan growing. First: Good trees must be set of such varieties as are adapted to the section in which they are to grow. Second: The best land only should be used for pecans; for a crop of such value can well be given the best. Third: After setting, the trees should be well cared for. No weeds, grass or other vegetation should be allowed to grow near the trees. It is, however, entirely proper, in fact it is best, to plant some crop between the trees, reserving a space around the tree which should be kept clean by means of the hoe or plow. These crops



This Tree Is One in an Orchard of Ninety Acres Which Has Been Seen and Admired by Many Visitors

should be highly fertilized and the trees will get their share. Remember that small grain should not be planted in a pecan grove, nor among any kind of fruit trees. It is no more difficult to grow a pecan tree than any other fruit or shade tree. Common sense used in caring for it will bring results; but if set as a post and cared for as such, it will not greatly outgrow or outbear a post. But with due observance of these three requisites success is practically certain.

He who plants a pecan tree is conferring a two-fold benefit: 1. On the surrounding country as a whole in that it makes the climate and rainfall more uniform. One reason why our rainfall is becoming more irregular, and many streams which twenty-five years ago were unfailing, now dry up every summer, is that our forests are being destroyed. For this reason he who adds even a few trees is helping to restore nature to its normal condition. 2. On himself and on his descendants for a hundred years, both in the healthful food which is provided, and in the profit which comes from the sale of surplus nuts.



A Row of Pecan Trees Growing on Mr. J. B. Wight's Home Lot in Cairo. These Trees Were Twelve Years Old When This Picture Was Taken; Sixteen Years Old Now. The Best Crops Borne by These Trees Have Averaged One Hundred Pounds of Nuts Per Tree

Undiscovered Wealth

NO one who has seen the English walnut groves of California but has admired them. They are things of beauty as well as of profit to their owners. And yet we have in the pecan something which for the South Atlantic and Gulf States is just as profitable as are the English walnuts of California, the orange trees of Florida, or the apple orchards of the Rogue River Valley. Our people as a whole are just beginning to awake to the fact that they have this undeveloped possibility of wealth right in their midst. Many have already learned that even a few trees around a home increase its attractiveness and comfort; and in addition to furnishing the most palatable and nutritious food, the sale of the surplus nuts gives many an easily-earned dollar to supply other comforts and necessities of life. When our people learn this, and pecan trees are found growing about every city and country home where there is room enough for even one tree, we will have made a long step forward towards our economic and financial betterment.

Some Records

THERE are many well authenticated records of pecan trees and orchards to show what has been done and can again be accomplished. The following are in point: Mr. John West, of Monticello, Florida, sold in 1910 to Mr. J. A. Granger of that place nine hundred pounds of nuts from one tree. The Lindsay tree in Monticello, which bore six hundred and thirty-eight pounds of nuts in its 23rd year, is also well known. On November 3, 1913, Mr. A. G. Delmas, Pascagoula, Mississippi, gathered two hundred and thirty-five pounds (green weight) of nuts from one tree 13 years old. Mr. Theo. Bechtel, of Ocean Springs, Mississippi, has a VanDeman pecan tree set in 1900 from which he harvested one hundred pounds of nuts in 1910, and one hundred and eighty-five pounds in 1913.

The Nut Grower for July, 1915, gives an account of one tree in Quincy, Florida, owned by Mr. C. R. Shaw, which bore nine hundred and sixty-

five pounds of pecans in 1914. The nut from which this tree grew was planted in 1880, near where was formerly a horse lot. This tree has now a diameter of 30 inches, an estimated height of 75 feet and a spread of branches of 80 feet.

Mr. C. S. Parker, of Thomasville, Georgia, set ten acres in pecans in January, 1905, from which he gathered in 1913 two thousand six hundred and ninety pounds of nuts, which sold for \$902.14. My own Frotscher, set in 1892, yielded an average income of one hundred dollars per year for five consecutive years. The above are not isolated cases but can be very largely added to if necessary. It is true that these trees are well cared for, but other trees can be looked after just as well. As emphasized in another place, the secret of successful and profitable pecan growing is GOOD CARE.

NEXT to seeing the thing itself, a picture will give the best idea of anything. The accompanying pictures, all of which, with one exception, are of trees growing on my own grounds, are given for what they show and teach.

There are suggestions here as to growing a tree or an orchard; but if cultural or other information is wanted, write for such.

Should the reader want prices on trees, the same may be had for the asking.

If one wishes to see my nursery of sixty acres, or my orchards aggregating one hundred and fifty acres, the "latch string hangs on the outside." Come, and welcome!

J. B. Wight
Cairo, Georgia